

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



12 February 2019

Miss Paula Thomas
Headteacher
Corby Old Village Primary School
High Street
Corby
Northamptonshire
NN17 1UU

Dear Miss Thomas

Short inspection of Corby Old Village Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 29 January 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in May 2015.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

You lead a school which clearly focuses on key aims. These include providing challenge and varied opportunities, nurturing and living specific values, as well as developing a school where pupils can be proud of who they are and their successes. There is a strong community feel, with a focus on each individual pupil. Pupils know the values of the school, especially that of respect. Core values were reinforced in the assembly seen during the inspection, which also supported pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. The senior leadership team and middle leaders work very effectively and have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. You and colleagues have a clear understanding of the priorities for improvement in the early years and key stage 1.

Pupils work well together, and those with whom I spoke are proud of their school. They are polite and speak positively about the varied experiences provided by staff. Pupils enjoy reading, in particular, and recalled fond memories of school trips and visits. Most parents and carers who expressed their views are very positive about the school. A typical comment was: 'The school is extremely well managed on a day-to-day basis. All children are encouraged to flourish and be as good as they can be, whatever their interests. There is clearly a very professional day-to-day operation.' However, a minority of parents who responded to the online parent survey, Parent View, were not as confident about their children's experiences.

You have a skilled team of governors who are committed to the success of the school. The governing body promotes the school's visions and ethos. Governors visit regularly and hold leaders to account. They fulfil their responsibilities well, especially their strategic role. They rightly identify the need to improve learning in key stage 1 to enable pupils to attain higher standards by the end of Year 2. This is a priority in the current action plan. Members of the governing body provide appropriate challenge as well as support to move the school forward. There is strong capacity for improvement within the governing body and among senior leaders.

At the time of the previous inspection, leaders were asked to improve pupils' progress in writing and provide greater challenge for all, with a focus on improving boys' writing. You and the staff team have worked successfully to develop the teaching of writing. As a result, in 2017 and 2018 pupils' attainment in writing at the end of Year 6 was very high. The proportions of pupils attaining the expected standard or greater depth were well above the national average. All groups of pupils, including boys, made good progress. Pupils' work in their books seen during the inspection, including in English, geography, history and science, contained many examples of skilled writing at length.

Another area of improvement highlighted by the previous inspection related to improving the opportunities for children in the early years to explore and learn outdoors. During the inspection, the outdoors area was set up for purposeful activities. It was stimulating, with many and varied resources for children to access and use. There has been much improvement in the outdoors environment. However, there is still room to improve overall provision in the early years.

Leaders were also asked to ensure that subject leaders develop their monitoring and evaluation roles. Both senior leaders and the governing body hold subject leaders to account for their leadership work. A structured monitoring cycle enables leaders to prioritise their focus and provide direction and support to improve teaching and pupils' learning. Subject and key stage leaders value the training, which enables them to fulfil their roles more effectively.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils are kept safe and safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Pupils who spoke with me say the school is a safe place and they are cared for well. They are taught how to be safe online using computers, tablets and mobile phones. Pupils are also taught about road and water safety, and spoke positively about the 'Bikeability' sessions. Many commented they are confident to speak to a member of staff if they have any worries or concerns. They say there is occasionally some unkindness, which is usually dealt with effectively. Parents also have access to various e-safety links on the school website, to support them in keeping their children safe online.

Staff are trained and receive regular safeguarding updates. They are aware of their responsibilities. You and the staff make appropriate referrals regarding any concerns using the school's reporting system. As designated safeguarding leader,

you follow up referrals to external agencies to ensure that pupils are cared for well. You work with various external agencies to provide support for pupils and their families.

Safer recruitment systems are in place. The single central record is accurate and thorough; all pre-employment checks of teachers and staff are in place. There is a positive culture of safeguarding in the school. You and the staff know pupils well, and this is a strength of the school.

Inspection findings

- The early years provision has experienced many changes in staffing in recent years, and as a result there has not been a consistency of strong teaching and learning. Children have not made the progress of which they are capable. Historically, children's attainment and progress have been low. Too few children have attained a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. However, in 2017 and 2018 a greater proportion of children attained above the age-related standard in reading.
- Leaders have brought about improvement this academic year. They have also secured specialist support provided by the local authority to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the Reception class. This support is beginning to improve the curricular provision in this class.
- Leaders have ensured that the early years classroom has discrete areas for reading, writing, number, painting and construction work. The indoor environment is organised purposefully. This is complemented by the zoned outdoors area, which also supports children's reading, writing and mathematics, as well as their physical and social development.
- Children are positive and support each other. They are happy, polite, listen to and respect adults, and follow instructions well. Many parents commented positively about their children's induction and about the way their children have settled into the school.
- A legacy of weaker provision in the early years, coupled with staffing changes in key stage 1, has resulted in low outcomes at the end of Year 2. The proportion of Year 2 pupils attaining the age-related standard in writing has improved year on year, but was still below the national average in 2018.
- A clear leadership focus, together with higher expectations and consistent teaching, is bringing about improved learning for pupils currently in key stage 1. Pupils are making progress in their writing and mathematics and gaps in their learning are closing. Pupils' work in books shows that they are learning the basics of writing and mathematics, with some being challenged to higher standards. However, many have much to do to catch up to attain the age-related standard by the end of Year 2. A clear focus on improving handwriting and presentation was reflected in pupils' positive attitudes and pride in their work.
- Leaders have ensured that staff in the early years and key stage 1 have received appropriate training to teach phonics. This resulted, in 2018, in an increased proportion of Year 1 pupils meeting the expected standard in the national phonics

screening check. During the inspection, the teaching of phonics was seen to be very effective in a Year 1 teaching group, with pupils decoding, blending and reading confidently to each other.

- Strong teaching in key stage 2 has brought about positive learning over the last three years. The proportions of pupils attaining age-related expectations at the end of Year 6 in the last three years were well above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Higher-than-average proportions of pupils also attained at greater depth. In reading, writing and mathematics pupils are making strong progress across key stage 2.
- The governing body fulfils its responsibility in relation to the use of additional funding. Governors and senior leaders effectively plan, monitor and evaluate the use of the pupil premium funding. This has brought about improved progress for disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. The strategies to support the personal development of disadvantaged pupils and their attendance have also had positive effects.
- The impact of the physical education and sports premium funding is seen within the wide range of opportunities provided. For example, during the inspection Year 2 pupils received coaching at the local tennis centre and pupils were involved in the after-school gymnastics club. Pupils value the range of sport offered and enjoy using the climbing apparatus funded through this additional resource.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the early years provision consistently meets the needs of children, enabling them to benefit from a more positive start to their schooling, and establish a secure foundation to prepare them well for Year 1
- they continue to address the gaps in pupils' prior learning in key stage 1 and bring about improved attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Northamptonshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Chris Davies
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and leaders of literacy and numeracy. I also met with three governors and spoke with the local authority officer by telephone.

I visited the early years and key stage 1 and key stage 2 classrooms with you and the deputy headteacher. We looked at workbooks and talked with pupils in lessons. I also looked at the quality of pupils' English and mathematics books with both senior leaders. I had a discussion with a group of pupils from Years 5 and 6. We considered the school's information on the progress of current pupils.

I looked at a range of documentary evidence. This included the school's evaluation of its own performance and plans for improvement. We evaluated current rates of attendance. I looked at various documents related to safeguarding, including examples of referrals made to external agencies and the single central record. I met with you as designated safeguarding leader. I gathered the views of parents at the beginning of the school day. I also took account of 45 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and considered 22 free-text responses, as well as 17 staff surveys and 20 pupil surveys. I reviewed the school's website.